

WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS FOR WESTERN WISCONSIN COUNTIES

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In Most Western Counties, Unemployment Rates Increase in November

November Local Labor Scene

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the **La Crosse Metropolitan Area** increased 0.1 of a percentage point in November to 3.9 percent. The November 2002 rate was 0.2 percentage points higher as compared to the La Crosse Metro rate for November 2001.

The unadjusted unemployment rate for Western Wisconsin increased 0.6 percentage points in November, to 4.2 percent. However, the Western Wisconsin unadjusted rate fell by 0.1 of a percentage point compared to last November, on the strength of strong year-to-year decreases in unadjusted unemployment rates in Monroe, Crawford, Jackson and Juneau Counties.

In searching for reasons as to why the unemployment rate grew in November, one reason that comes to mind is that the economy is continuing on a pattern of seasonal fluctuation, as determined by an observation of similar trends over the past several years.

In two of the eight Western Wisconsin counties, Buffalo and La Crosse, increases in the civilian labor force were noted. The La Crosse Metro Area (defined as Houston County Minnesota plus La Crosse County Wisconsin) also witnessed an increasing labor force in November. In La Crosse County, Buffalo County, and the La Crosse Metro Area these increasing labor force totals were a contributing factor to the rising unemployment rates in these areas because in large part, these additional job seekers were not put to work in November. While this change is significant in these two counties, it does show some signs of an optimistic job outlook as any growth in the number of discouraged workers would be reflected in a decrease in the labor force. An increasing labor force allows one to conclude that workers in these two counties are becoming more optimistic about the 2003 job market. Therefore, one can infer from these figures that there is a reasonable expectation of strong rehiring patterns over the course of 2003 in these two counties.

An analysis of changes in employment in the region's major industry sectors over the course of the past month shows a number of notable trends. First, owing almost entirely to scheduling patterns and seasonal shifts in the weather, employment in the construction sector decreased over the past month, shedding 331 positions regionally. This is in line with expectations for the month. While the area's manufacturing employers have been shedding jobs over much of the last two years, recently Western Wisconsin's manufacturing sector has started to buck national and state trends of declining employment levels due to sluggish ordering and

the growing pains of a gradual transition from generalized to specialized production cycles. To date, much of the area's recovery in manufacturing employment can be found in Trempealeau County.

Statewide

Wisconsin's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for November was estimated at 5.1, up two-tenths of a percentage point from October's final rate and two-tenths percentage points higher than the November 2001

Labor Force Estimates (Seasonally Adjusted)			
	LaCrosse MSA*	Wisconsin (000s)	United States (000s)
Current month: Nov 2002			
Civilian Labor Force	76,200	3,067.6	142,733
Employment	73,200	2,912.2	134,225
Unemployment	3,000	155.4	8,508
Unemployment rate	3.9%	5.1%	6.0%
Change from one month ago			
Civilian Labor Force	500	-0.9	(390)
Employment	400	-6.5	(689)
Unemployment	200	5.6	299
Unemployment rate	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%
Change from one year ago			
Civilian Labor Force	2,700	66.1	454
Employment	2,400	56.8	(28)
Unemployment	300	9.4	482
Unemployment rate	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%

Note: All estimates are preliminary and based on place of residence.

* La Crosse MSA Statistics include Houston County Minnesota

figure. Statewide, the manufacturing sector, both durable and nondurable continues to struggle, with durable goods manufacturing decreasing by 1,600 jobs. Nondurable goods manufacturing also experienced a decrease of 1,500 jobs, which is near the norm for this time of year. Wisconsin's very strong food and kindred products industry normally slows down at this time of the year – especially in the fruits and vegetable canning industry.

National Bits

The national seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for November was 6.0 percent, up from 5.7 percent in October. CNN/Money predicts that Holiday Shopping Season 2002 will be the worst holiday shopping season in at least 30 years. According to ShopperTrak, preliminary national holiday sales figures don't look good. Holiday shopping fell 11 percent to \$113 billion between Thanksgiving and Christmas in 2002.

Western Wisconsin Employment Scene: November 2002

	Buffalo	Crawford	Jackson	Juneau	LaCrosse	Monroe	Trempealeau	Vernon	Region	Wisconsin
Civilian Labor Force*	7,931	10,739	11,970	10,098	64,349	20,518	15,569	14,262	155,436	3,053,929
Employed	7,634	10,346	11,508	9,288	62,092	19,615	14,832	13,627	148,942	2,915,081
Unemployed	297	393	462	810	2,257	903	737	635	6,494	138,848
Unemployment rate	3.7%	3.7%	3.9%	8.0%	3.5%	4.4%	4.7%	4.5%	4.2%	4.5%
Total, all industries**	5,349	8,413	8,650	8,567	71,250	17,899	13,299	8,471	141,898	2,867,541
Construction & Mining	159	175	994	283	3,170	578	311	237	5,907	130,759
Manufacturing	290	1,511	879	2,241	9,720	3,396	6,142	957	25,136	567,298
Transportation & Public Utilities	2,118	249	758	317	3,450	1,193	616	383	9,084	131,751
Wholesale Trade	273	193	106	181	4,370	566	332	404	6,425	135,658
Retail Trade	609	3,222	1,303	1,673	14,140	4,047	1,503	1,566	28,063	519,310
Finance,Insurance,Real Estate	154	227	232	253	3,150	590	330	398	5,334	153,940
Services	816	1,858	1,255	1,511	22,990	2,980	1,819	2,287	35,516	795,148
Government	930	978	3,123	2,108	10,260	4,549	2,246	2,239	26,433	433,677
Change from previous month										
Civilian Labor Force*	23	-98	-282	-23	264	-215	-46	-142	-519	249
Employed	-67	-146	-348	-124	10	-258	-213	-248	-1,394	-12,367
Unemployed	90	48	66	101	254	43	167	106	875	12,616
Unemployment rate	1.1%	0.5%	0.6%	1.0%	0.4%	0.3%	1.1%	0.8%	0.6%	0.4%
Total, all industries**	96	0	-161	-10	350	-8	7	6	280	471
Construction & Mining	-4	-8	-185	-3	-90	-11	-19	-11	-331	-3,487
Manufacturing	1	-76	-5	7	60	66	54	14	121	-3,059
Transportation & Public Utilities	76	3	19	1	-90	1	13	1	24	-882
Wholesale Trade	0	2	-1	-1	-10	-2	5	0	-7	172
Retail Trade	20	130	9	6	290	57	12	5	529	8,739
Finance,Insurance,Real Estate	1	-1	2	3	10	-5	-13	5	2	103
Services	-12	-34	-15	-59	90	-116	-58	-4	-208	-7,596
Government	14	-16	15	36	90	2	13	-4	150	6,481
Change from year ago										
Civilian Labor Force*	-104	140	623	-231	2,319	511	973	645	4,876	59,643
Employed	-108	208	680	-148	2,094	568	927	578	4,799	53,936
Unemployed	4	-68	-57	-83	225	-57	46	67	77	5,707
Unemployment rate	0.1%	-0.7%	-0.7%	-0.6%	0.2%	-0.4%	0.0%	0.3%	-0.1%	0.1%
Total, all industries**	121	1	374	-321	1,690	215	608	161	2,849	24,248
Construction & Mining	17	1	175	-3	420	28	-8	-11	621	2,987
Manufacturing	-25	-174	1	-206	90	-21	559	8	233	-8,842
Transportation & Public Utilities	158	61	29	-6	130	14	48	24	459	-1,630
Wholesale Trade	36	7	1	-24	10	-65	-12	-11	-58	-1,716
Retail Trade	-9	18	-39	2	120	262	-4	2	353	3,010
Finance,Insurance,Real Estate	-2	13	0	10	170	24	3	15	233	3,224
Services	-7	24	137	-11	850	30	-55	58	1,025	20,430
Government	-48	50	69	-83	-100	-57	77	75	-17	6,785

* Includes participants residing in area. ** Includes employment with employers located in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted.
Current month estimates are preliminary.

Look for the most current Labor Market Information at: <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi/>

Direct questions and comments to: **William Brockmiller, Labor Market Analyst**

La Crosse Job Center, 402 North 8th Street, La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601

608-785-9337 E-mail: william.brockmiller@dwd.state.wi.us